

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—Jno. 8:32.

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"Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18).

SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

WHAT IS "THE FLESH"?

Although it may seem quite trite on the surface, one of the believer's chief adversaries is his own flesh. The apparent triteness of that statement proceeds from an alarming ignorance of the flesh itself, however. That the flesh is condemned by God is evident, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50); and again; "no flesh shall be justified in His sight" (Rom. 3:20). Of the redeemed it is said; "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1). Further, the Holy Spirit witnesses that those who "live" after the flesh "shall die" (Rom. 8:13); and again; "he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Gal. 6:8). Paul, speaking for all "the children" (Heb. 2:13), confessed; "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18), thereby evincing the utter destitution of "the flesh". Of the followers of false prophets who defile the church, and were epitomized by Jude as "filthy dreamers" it was prophesied that their garments would be "spotted by the flesh" (Jude 24). The "flesh," in the sense of Scripture, is never condoned, never excused, never lauded - but always condemned and upbraided by the Lord. It is imperative, therefore, that the saints have at least a degree of good understanding concerning the proper identification of "the flesh."

Many innocently believe that "the flesh", in this usage, refers merely to our earthly bodies of flesh, blood, and bone; and possessed of such a view, they fall prey to many delusions and snares of the Evil One, who greatly delights to deceive us with such gibberish. The term "flesh", however, is very wide in scope, and deals with a fundamental truth of God; namely, the absolute spiritual deadness and destitution of all men by nature, which condition of necessity eventuates in complete and total alienation from God, and enmity to God. Jesus, in His conversation (if I may so vulgarly refer to that discourse) with Nicodemus, finely identified "flesh" when He pronounced; "That which is born of flesh is flesh" (John 3:6). Our Lord, in this text, was drawing some observations concerning the natural and the spiritual births. The one issued forth from earth, the other from "above." The earthly birth could only produce earthly, or mundane, offspring, while the new, or heavenly birth, could only produce spiritual offspring. The "flesh", by this definition, is everything about man that is natural - everything, I say, that comes by natural birth. It is to be observed that men are constantly seeking to exalt themselves, declaring the superiority of their abilities and endowments. While this is certainly true in respect to a comparison with the animal kingdom, it is not true as regards the accessibility of God to man. A synonym for "flesh" is "natural man" (1 Cor. 2:14) - one that has knowledgeable access only to those things that are "under the

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The Word of Truth

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What Is "The Flesh"?

(From page 1)

sun" (Eccl. 1:9). For that matter, "flesh" may also be identified as "man". As it is written; "Who art thou, **oh man**, that repliest against God?" (Rom. 9:20); and again; "They like **men** have transgressed my covenant" (Hosea 6:7); and again; ". . . how much more abominable and filthy is **man**, which drinketh iniquity like water" (Job 15:16). "Flesh" refers to the created and **finite portion of the redeemed, and to all of the unredeemed ("all" meaning, all of their individual person). It is that which is devoid of eternal life, which has no intimate association with the "Father of spirits" (Heb. 12:9), and which is limited in its perspective to things terrestrial or earthly — things which "do appear" (Heb. 11:3). Apart from the regeneration of new (totally new) life within, by the Holy Spirit (John 3:3-5; I Cor. 6:11), "flesh" describes man in his entirety. Prior to being "in Christ" and a "new creature" (II Cor. 5:17), man's **whole** personality and being is aptly termed, "flesh." Following the "sanctification of the Spirit" (I Pet. 1:2), and consequent "faith of Christ" (Phil. 3:9; Gal. 2:20), the "flesh" refers to all that has not been renewed; all that is determined to be finally separated from the believer in glory. Thoughts, affections, desires, etc., are encompassed by this word — in short, everything that "exalts itself against the knowledge of God" (II Cor. 10:5), whether within or without, seen or unseen, sensible or insensible!**

It is with this in mind that the Scriptures speak of "the **mind of the flesh**" (or the "carnal mind" Rom. 8:7), the "**lusts of the flesh**" (I Pet. 2:11; I Jno. 2:15-17), the "**desires of the flesh**" (Eph. 2:3), the "**works of the flesh**" (Gal. 5:19), the "**will of the flesh**" (John 1:13), the "**satisfying of the flesh**" (Col. 2:23), and the "**sins of the flesh**" (Col. 2:11). **These are but the projections of our unredeemed nature; of that portion of our being which was not wrought by the Holy Spirit because of, and in the Name of, Jesus Christ (I Cor. 6:11). The thinking, ambitions, and desires of the believer are to flow forth from that "eternal life" (I Jno. 1:1) which he has within! His conceptions, analyses, and observations are all to**

be developed within the confines of spiritual illumination — yea, the illumination which took place when God "shined" into his heart "with the light of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus" (II Cor. 4:6). This is the only activity that is honorable and valid before God "with whom we have to do." **If our thinking is unassisted by the Holy Spirit, unilluminated by the Divine light — it is fleshly thinking, however sound and honorable it may appear.** It is for this reason that it can but incur the wrath and indignation of Almighty God! Therefore to "walk not after the flesh" (Rom. 8:4) is but another way of saying; "who lean not to their own understanding" (Prov. 3:5-6).

Because our earthly natures are totally bent toward hell, we are admonished; "Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:14); i.e., "Do not permit yourself to get into situations where your earthly nature has the upper hand." It is also declared that "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, together with the lusts and affections thereof" (Gal. 5:24). The "flesh" is that which "lusteth (desireth fervently) against the Spirit (Holy Spirit)" — Gal. 5:17, vigorously militating against His wooings and instruction. That is to say, the Holy Spirit is opposed in His work by everything natural within us, and were it not for the "creation" of a new and "right heart" (Psa. 51:10), there could not possibly be any degree of receptivity to Him. **He must literally overcome us (as we are by nature) in order to our salvation; that is how base we really are!** The old theologians called this "total depravity", "depravity" meaning "corruption." The term has lost its popularity among church leaders today because its embracement would at once destroy their little kingdoms (which are destined to fall anyway — Heb. 12:27). While the term may well carry unscriptural connotations to many, the original intent and conception embodied in its usage was sound — that of the total and complete corruption of man. None ought to be alarmed at this truth (if so be that they know the Lord), for it is taught with great repetitiveness in Scripture: ". . . the imagination of man's heart is evil **from his youth**" (Gen. 8:21); "For **vain** man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt" (Job 11:12); "Who can bring a clean thing out of an **unclean? not one**" (Job 14:4); "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of man to see if there were **any** that did understand, and seek God. They are **all** gone aside, they are **altogether** become filthy: there is **none** that doeth good, no **not one**" (Psa. 14:2-3); "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are **vanity** (Psa. 94:11); "The way of man is **forward and strange**" (Prov. 21:8); "The heart is **deceitful** above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it" (Jer. 17:9); "**I am carnal, sold under sin**" (Rom. 7:14; "we . . . were **by nature** children of wrath" (Eph. 2:3). These references could be multiplied many times, but for those that entertain any similitude of familiarity with the Scriptures, the point under consideration is incontestable. Yet, if there be some that cannot receive this truth, we say that their refusal to re-

ceive it is but another evidence of their inherent corruption. Man, it is true, can do absolutely nothing within himself but make God angry! He can, of himself, do nothing but displease God, disobey God, hate God, and resist God. If this were not so, then regeneration would not be a necessity: it would only be necessary to awaken in man that little spark of goodness that has been obscured by his environment and circumstances. But, if it be acknowledged that there is "no good thing" within our natures, then the absolute necessity of a new creation by God is readily and joyfully received as the truth — and that it is!

To believers, "the flesh" refers to **the dreadful dregs of their old nature which yet remain in them.** It is that segment of their being which they seek, by grace, to subdue and slay. It "understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither indeed can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2:14). This vile part of our nature "is not subject to the law of God, **neither indeed can be**" (Rom. 8:7), for it is "enmity (itself) against God". There is a built in rebellion against God in every mortal, and until rescued from the grievous situation by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, our condition is hopeless, for we not only possess not the power to change our own natures, there is not the slightest inclination to do so while yet in a state of "nature." "Flesh" is the "law that is in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin and death" (Rom. 7:23). This is the "old man" mentioned by Paul (Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:9); i.e., the nature within that has been supplanted by the "Divine Nature", of which we have become partakers (II Pet. 1:4). **The "newness of life" (Rom. 6:4) which we receive in Christ brings an end to the reign of sin, therefore, because it subordinates all within us that is natural (from which sin springs).** In a word, "flesh" refers to you, "Spirit" refers to Christ; as it is written; "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). "I" is equated here with "flesh", "Christ" with "newness of life" — "not I, but Christ!" By "live", Paul refers to the expressions

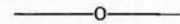
TRACTS AVAILABLE TO OUR READERS

The following tracts are available to our readers at no cost, and you are urged to ask for those which you feel could be profitably used.

1. GOD AND MAN - A series of four small tracts dealing with the nature of God, the nature of man, God's gift to man, and God and man together. (This tract has now been printed in the Indian language, and is being distributed in India).
2. SEEKING THE LORD - A pamphlet dealing with the fundamental necessity of seeking the Lord - whether one is a believer or an unbeliever. A true encouragement to those confused by the traditions and laws of men.
3. THE ELECTION OF GRACE - A booklet dealing with a great and comforting theme. Only a few of these are left - the supply will soon be exhausted.

and responses of our beings which are now primary — which have the ascendancy. Life is no more an expression of my sinful nature, but rather of the "Divine Nature" within me; God "working in me both to will and to do of His own good pleasure" (or, according to His will) — Phil. 2:13; and again; "The Lord making you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight" (Heb. 13:20-21). From the Divine and heavenly perspective, **true spiritual life is but the expression of the Divine life.** From the viewpoint of the redeemed, it is the hearty response of a humbled heart to **Divine initiative and power.** All else is flesh — cursed and condemned, and unworthy of any attention or indulgence.

Now, there is a wideness to this sound doctrine! **Each believer must devote himself to the subordination of everything about himself that is purely natural, and the expression of everything about him that is supernatural.** Remember that in the flesh we serve "the law of sin and of death" (Rom. 7:35), and that is all that flesh can serve. But, praise the Lord, the child of God is not "a debtor to the flesh to live after the flesh" (Rom. 8:12). Rather, we claim that glorious and comforting promise; "As man as are led by the Spirit, these are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). **This Spirit of God leads us to mortify the flesh;** therefore, all engaged in the mortification of it are truly walking "in the Spirit." Amen.



The Righteousness of the Law Versus the Righteousness of Faith

"For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? **The word is nigh thee,** even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the **word of faith** which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt **believe** in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man **believeth** unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." — Rom. 10:5-10

The true doctrine of righteousness is vital to sound-mindedness, and a pure and confident heart; therefore, Satan does his utmost to obscure this blessed truth, and to garble it with words which come from and are addressed to the flesh. We must, in view of this, be diligent to promulgate the true report concerning righteousness in order to the comfort and edification of all believers, and the overthrowing of the powers of darkness which now pervade the land. It is to the everlasting benefit of "God's elect" (Rom. 8:33) that they hear the "glad tidings of good

things" (Rom. 10:16), even the "glorious Gospel of the blessed God" (I Tim. 1:11). After some years in fundamental and evangelical circles (as they are wont to be called), "I have learned by experience" that there is very little true Gospel preached — especially pertaining to the attaining of righteousness before God. Satan will always seek to persuade men that the Lord deals with them upon the basis of merit, while the Holy Spirit is instructing men through the Apostles and prophets of the Lord that He deals with them upon the basis of faith that is itself "obtained" (II Pet. 1:1). It is interesting to observe, at this point, that those who emphasize works speak very little concerning the eternal Word of God. The Scriptures are not their nomenclature, and they speak not in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual words (I Cor. 2:13). They are rather addicted to speaking of experiences, tradition, possibilities, and illustrations.

I particularly observe in their writings that they continually preach themselves, telling what the Lord is purported to have done in and through them. It is not that testimonies of the glorious working of God within are not good; God forbid that we should be guilty of teaching such heresy! But, we are not to make such testimonies the subject of our preaching and teaching. The relation of spiritual blessings and prosperity among the brethren of Christ is good and wholesome, but it is secondary to the instruction of the Word of God. The Apostle put it this way; "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus, the LORD, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (II Cor. 4:5). In the general Chicago vicinity, one minister of rather widespread fame, delivered a series of messages on his own life — thus evincing his alienation in heart from the purpose of the Lord, and His blindness to the "knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus". Let it never be said of you, my reader, that you preached or taught yourself — preach Christ, and Him crucified (I Cor. 2:2). **On the other hand, those that are of faith major on the Scriptures; they speak what the Lord has spoken, and speak not of what CAN be done, but what HAS BEEN done — then calling upon the hearers to believe God.** There are few areas where the distinction between law and grace is so evidenced in preaching, as in the sphere of righteousness before the Lord, however, and therefore we now give time to that most noble theme.

In our text, the Apostle Paul is dealing with the subject of attaining unto righteousness **before the Lord**. Prior to his instruction here, he has spoken of the Gentiles and the Jews, and their relationships to this righteousness; "What shall we say then? That the Gentiles which **sought not** after righteousness, **have attained** unto righteousness, even the righteousness of faith. But Israel, which **followed after** the law of righteousness, **hath not attained** unto the law of righteousness. Wherefore? **Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.** For they stumbled at that stumbling-stone." With all of their tutoring in the law and the prophets, with covenants, Divine service, the oracles of

God, the prophets, all of the promises, and the adoption (Rom. 9:1-4) — to say nothing of their actual and diligent pursuit of righteousness, the Israelites never did become truly righteous. Yet, the Gentiles, who were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12) attained unto righteousness **even though they sought it not!** This ought to forever stop the mouths of those who preach that man is capable of justifying himself before God — that man, through his own works and ingenuity, can place himself in a position where God must and will bless him! **The Israelites forever stand as an example to us of the futility of even an enlightened and commissioned people making themselves righteous. The Gentiles, on the other hand, show us that men are justified freely by God's grace, not according to works, for they did not even seek after such righteousness** (a clear exposure of the fallaciousness of sectarian dogmas concerning "seeking.") The Apostle is now in the process of explaining **why** Israel did not attain unto the righteousness of the law — that is, the righteousness that was manifested within the law.

It might be well here to make a few remarks concerning righteousness itself. **Righteousness is equated, by the Holy Spirit, with the forgiveness of sins.** As it is written; "Even David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4:6-8). **Man's righteousness, therefore, is not established by his own works, but rather by God removing his own works, and imputing unto him the righteousness of Christ Himself** (I Cor. 1:30; II Cor. 5:21). This is done when the Lord remits our sins, forgiving them because of the "redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:14). The only thing that stands between man and God, or prohibits God from diffusing His blessings and benefits upon man without reservation, is sin! That is the subject of the whole matter! **Once sin is removed, there is total and complete righteousness in God's eyes, and He is at perfect liberty to pour forth His Spirit and His benefits justly and copiously; praise the Lord.** Righteousness is that removal of sins; the casting of them behind God's back, where they shall never again be seen or brought to mind (Isa. 38:17; Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:12; 10:17). If, then, we can find how to be righteous before God, we have found how to obtain the blessings of the Lord. I mention these few remarks concerning righteousness to establish the truth that **righteousness is not the RESULT of the forgiveness of sins, it is the forgiveness of sins; they are one and the same!**

Israel did not attain unto righteousness because they were "ignorant of God's righteousness" (Rom. 10:3). **Now, ignorance is the very basis of alienation from the life of God** (which is another way of saying ignorance keeps us from being righteous). As it is written; "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from

the life of God through the ignorance that is in them . . ." (Eph. 4:18). It is Satan's purpose and work to "blind" men's minds, in order that they "see not" nor understand the glorious Gospel (II Cor. 4:4). Once blinded — the understanding darkened — men are dead, alienated from God's life, and totally unrighteous. It is, therefore, necessary that the understanding be illuminated concerning the Lord; that the mind be impregnated with Divine truth, and that the glory of God be seen and understood "in the face of Christ Jesus" (II Cor. 3:18). We must strive to have our understanding fruitful in the knowledge of God, lest we seek in vain to establish our own righteousness as Israel. **IGNORANT OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD!** That is the sad plight of the natural man. He is unaware of the uprightness of the Lord; that God is right in everything that He does!

This is repeatedly declared in the Scriptures, and it is edifying to the spirit to peruse these references "with the spirit and with the understanding" (Ezra 9:15; Job 36:3; Psa. 48:10; 112:4; 116:5; Isa. 51:8; Jer. 12:1; Hosea 14:9; Rom. 9:14). **The Lord's dealings with us are right; what He says is right; what He does is right.** Temper this knowledge with an understanding that "All things are of God" (II Cor. 5:18), and "All things are of Him and through Him, and to Him" (Rom. 9:36). **We are to receive everything as from the Lord, for He is directing our steps, and has plotted the course of our lives.** If we acknowledge not His wisdom in the circumstances of our lives, we shall bear the weight of our own sins, for then should we be ignorant of His own righteousness, and foolishly go about to establish our own righteousness. Israel murmured at their condition, questioned the wisdom of God's direction and provisions, and sought to alleviate their hardship by following the dictates of their flesh. When they left Egypt and came to the Red Sea, they questioned God's righteousness in leading them forth; when they came to the waters of Marah and found them bitter, they again charged God with unrighteousness; when they had but "light bread" to eat, they objected to the Lord's provision; when they had no king, they disagreed with the method of the Lord, and sought a King for their own. You see, they were ignorant of the righteousness of God; and that is why they did not attain unto it!

Our Lord Jesus spoke of God's righteousness in this wise; "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS . . ." (Matt. 6:33). **It is primary that each believer seek to discern the wisdom of the Lord and the righteousness of the Lord in dealing with him; for that is the real key to the attaining of true righteousness.** As it is written; "Trust in the Lord with all of thy heart, and lean not unto thy own understanding. **IN** all of thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:5-6). God is righteous! His dealings with us are righteous! All of His works are performed in righteousness! We acknowledge the Lord by confessing; "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good." Do not murmur at your station in life, at the

Lord's pronouncements concerning those things which are found in your life, or at the Father's method of redemption! Rather **ACKNOWLEDGE HIM!** Confess that the Judge of all the earth shall do right! Faith can grasp on to that; it is reality, and thus can become substance to the soul and conviction to the heart! But, even as in the case of Israel, those that are ignorant of God's righteousness will inevitably go about to establish their own righteousness, not **submitting** to the righteousness of God. They will seek to plot their own course, direct their own steps, and make their own choices independent of the guidance and tutelage of the Father which is in heaven. Thus shall they fall short of righteousness, and their own righteousnesses shall ever remain as "filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6). "Man's goings are of the Lord; how then can a man understand his own way"? (Prov. 20:24). Let all seek to attain unto that righteousness which is of God, and forever cease to establish their own!

Christ, the end of the Law FOR righteousness

The glorious tidings of the Gospel of peace is, among other things, that "Christ is the **END** of the Law for righteousness to **EVERYONE** that believeth". He is not the end of the Law, but the end of the law for righteousness! The law was "weak through the flesh" (Rom. 8:3), and as such could not serve the Divine purpose of conforming the elect to the Divine Image (Rom. 8:29-30). The flesh was unable to fulfill the Law, because it (the flesh) was enmity against God, and in the flesh "dwelt no good thing". Further, the mind of the flesh could not even comprehend the Divine intentions of the Law, was not subject to the Law, neither indeed could be (Rom. 8:3-8). **The function of the law was to bring us to Christ, stripped of confidence in the flesh, and under the weight of guilt;** "Wherefore, the Law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:24-25). The Law was given, among other things, to cause us to lose all confidence in our own works, in our own abilities — and thus, bringing us to Christ, to pave the way for justification by faith. **In Christ, no benefits, promises, or blessings are conferred upon men apart from faith.** Faith is the thing that pleases the Lord, and without it, it is "impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). **God does not deal with men upon the basis of their adherence to the Law and the commandments, but upon the basis of their faith.**

This was heralded as the means of access to God even in Christ's earthly ministry. It was then that He declared to men that received grace; "Thy faith hath made thee whole"; "According to thy faith be it unto thee"; "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth"; "Thy faith hath saved thee", etc. These pronouncements set forth clearly the "end of the law for righteousness", and is a pure consolation to those that seek to be holy and upright before the Lord. Concerning the cessation of the Law as a means to the obtaining of righteousness, the Scripture declares; "Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of command-

ments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain, one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:15-16); "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross" (Col. 2:14). **No longer do men approach unto the living God upon the basis of their works or their achievements, but through faith!** "He that cometh to God must BELIEVE that He is, and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6).

The Law defines sin, and instructs us what to do; but gives no power to effectually perform it. The whole matter is placed in our hands under the economy of Law. If we perform the doing of it, we are blessed, if not, we are cursed. All depends upon our execution of the Lord's will in our own natural energy. But, praise God, Christ is the end of that whole economy! This is a sound of gladness to those who have labored under the yoke of the Law, for they have come to realize their utter impotency to perform the will of God without the power of God. Besides all of this, even were a man to perform the whole Law (which none are able to do), he would still have to confess, "I am an unprofitable servant, I have done that which it was my duty to do" (Luke 17:10). Since there is no merit in merely performing our duty, there could be no legitimate reward offered. Yet, the whole matter is seen in its hopelessness when it is perceived and understood with the heart that it is impossible for a mortal to keep the whole law, or any single point of the law, within the confines of his own natural energy. Righteousness (the remission and forgiveness of sins) must be appropriated, then, through some other means than works, or the keeping of the law. Therefore, Christ is not only the "end of the Law for righteousness to every one that believeth", but He Himself becomes the "righteousness of God" unto us — a means to the actual appropriation of eternal righteousness (I Cor. 1:30; II Cor. 5:20-21).

The Righteousness Which Is Of The Law

Paul, the Apostle, affirms that Moses did describe the righteousness which is of the Law when he said; "the man which **doeth** those things shall live **by** them". That is a quotation of Leviticus 18:5, and means that the Lord, according to Moses, would give life — eternal life — upon the basis of perfect obedience to the Law. Mark that — **perfect obedience to the Law!** In further amplification of this point, James wrote; "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). Yet, this is the righteousness which is of the Law — **God will acquit your sins, make you pure and holy before His sight, upon the basis of your perfect obedience to the law.** Of course, it is at once observed that if there were perfect obedience to the law, there would be no sin, and therefore no need for forgiveness.

It is acknowledged that most approaches to righteousness today, however, are made upon the basis of strict and unflinching obedience to the

law. "This do and live" is the code of most churches, and thus their alienation from God is manifested, along with their impoverished spiritual state. **A man cannot become righteous by doing something;** "Knowing that a man is **not** justified by the works of the law, but by the **faith** of (begotten of) Christ, even we have **believed** in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the **faith** of Christ, and not by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Gal. 2:16).

God is not favorable towards us upon the basis of our accomplishments, but upon the basis of our faith! You may well approach the Lord upon the basis of meeting certain conditions in your own energy in order to the obtaining of blessings — that is your business. But, it is the obligation of every preacher of the Word to put men in remembrance of the truth that "Without **faith** it is impossible to please God, for he that cometh to God must **believe** that He is, and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb. 11:6). No man is righteous because of what he does — that is impossible. It is rather this way — **a man does right because he IS righteous.** Let all of God's people forever cease to approach God with the idea of obtaining merit for their good works of obedience to the Law. Rather; come in faith believing, in order that true and effectual righteousness may be imputed unto you.

The Righteousness Which Is Of Faith

The righteousness which is of faith at once brings to our minds the truth that our faith is imputed to us for righteousness. Righteousness, declares Paul, is "of" — i.e., springs forth from — "faith". True righteousness is elsewhere set forth in Scripture in this light; "That I might be found in Him, not having a righteousness of mine own, which is of the law, but that which is **through the faith** of (begotten of) Christ, the righteousness which is of God **by faith**" (Phil. 3:9); "Even the righteousness which is of God by faith . . ." (Rom. 3:22); "But to him that **worketh not** (for righteousness), but **believeth** on Him that justifieth the ungodly, **his faith is counted for righteousness**" (Rom. 4:5; "And he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision, a seal of **the righteousness of the faith** which he had yet being uncircumcised" (Rom. 4:11); "For the promise that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through **the righteousness of faith**" (Rom. 4:13); "And therefore it (faith) was imputed to him (Abraham) for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we **believe** on Him that raised up Jesus from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:22-25). **Righteousness, then, is the forgiveness of sins, the blotting out of our transgressions, the state of uprightness before God, which flows forth from that "like precious faith" which we "obtain" from God (II Pet. 1:1-2). It is granted because we "believe", not because we "do"!**

But, how does this righteousness which is of faith speak? First, in a negative way, to discour-

age the energy of the flesh; "Say **not** in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven, (that is to bring Christ down from above:) Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead)" (Rom. 10:6-7). Immediately it is seen that **true righteousness subdues the curiosity of the flesh**, not permitting it to exert its despicable influence upon the heart. The passage Paul gives is taken from Deuteronomy 30:11-14, in which Moses is instructing the people of God concerning the message of God. He points out that the Lord did not tell them of a commandment that was far from them, which they must, in their own strength, retrieve for themselves. Rather, the commandment of God had been sent to them — given to them — yea, it was nigh them, even in their mouth and in their heart. Justification, Paul declares, is like this: **it is not something that we must obtain, it is something that is freely given!** The Lord "SENT redemption to His people" (Psa. 111:9), He did not offer it, or sell it, or grant it by merit. The truth of "sending" is declared everywhere in Scripture in relation to our salvation, and a glad sound it is (Jno. 3:17; Acts 3:26; 10:36; Gal. 4:6; Acts 13:26; 28:28). The word "sent" implies several things to our hearts: (1. A work already wrought. (2. A Divine and compassionate love that motivates the sending. (3. An immutable purpose. (4. Eternal Omnipotence that overcomes all adversaries. **The recipients of grace are not required to go up into heaven and bring it down to themselves; nor are they called upon to descend into the deep and bring it up to their proximity.** No! These things are brought to them; yea, they are nigh them, through the Power of God Himself.

When Gabriel, the angel, came to Zacharias to herald the message of the coming birth of John the Baptist, he was confronted with unbelief. After declaring the will and purpose of the Lord concerning a son to be born to Zacharias and Elizabeth, the aged priest retorted; "Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years." (Luke 1:18). The reply of the angel sets forth the glory of the word being nigh us; "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am SENT to speak unto thee, and to show thee these glad tidings. And behold thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not **my words**, which shall be fulfilled in their season" (Luke 1:18-20). God had revealed to Zacharias His will, and Zacharias had not believed. What Gabriel was saying is; "How shall you know? This is how you do know — I am Gabriel! I have come from the very presence of God to bring these glad tidings — that is how you know; I have told you!" He might well have said; "The **word** is nigh thee!"

If our redemption was dependent upon our own works, then there are at least two things that we would have to perform. It was essential that Jesus come down from heaven, and be raised from the dead, in order to our justification before God. Now, if our salvation truly is **dependent** upon us, Paul declares that we would have to go up to heaven and bring Christ down to

earth, and — His death being accomplished — we would have to raise Him again from the dead! That is the sort of work that is required if man is to save himself. **But, the righteousness of faith discourages such foolish notions, and takes the Word of God for its comfort.** "THE WORD IS NIGH THEE"! Brethren, we have God's Word — is there more that we must have? Is it proper for the believer to ask God for **more** than His Word, insofar as his faith is concerned? Does faith and righteousness rest upon something additional to the Word? Remember that God has "exalted His word above all His Name" (Psa. 138:2), in order that we might trust implicitly in what He has said. It is written; "Wherein God, willing **MORE ABUNDANTLY** to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil . . ." (Heb. 6:17-20).

Our hope is based upon the Word of God; yea our very realization of salvation is based upon that eternal Word. Because He was willing to show more abundantly the unchangeableness of His Word, He confirmed it with an oath; praise the Lord! There are times when the Lord, according to His good pleasure, does not work so **apparently** to saints; Yet, at no time will He retract His glorious Word. We cleave unto it in hope, knowing that what the Lord hath promised, He will also do. "THE WORD IS NIGH THEE" — praise the Lord! And once sent forth, that word cannot be called back, for the "gifts and callings of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29). **The message has been sent forth, and those that believe it are considered righteous by an Omniscient and Beneficent God!** Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness (Rom. 4:3), and it shall also be so with you! The message to Abraham was that the Lord was going to bring him to a land of his own; that he would bless all the nations of the earth through his seed. Abraham believed that, and from thenceforth was righteous before the Lord. The message that the Father has sent forth to us is that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (II Cor. 5:18-20). Those that believe that message in their heart shall be righteous before God! What must you do for righteousness — **believe what the Lord hath said!** Do not ask for more; "THE WORD IS NIGH THEE" — you have that, believe it! Does not "faith come by hearing" (Rom. 10:17), and is not the message of God that to which our hearing is to be directed? Remember that Jesus declared we become "clean through the Word" that He speaks unto us (John 15:3). Again, the "word of His grace is able to build us up and give us an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith" (Acts 20:32); and again; The word "worketh effectually in them that believe" (I Thess. 2:13). Was it not our beloved brother James that declared; "wherefore, laying aside all superfluity of naughtiness,

receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save the soul" (James 1:21).

Faith can lay hold of the "word" — the message of an accomplished work. But faith cannot grasp a message of possibilities or probabilities. It rests upon facts — **accomplished facts!** The message that appeals to faith is called by Paul "the **word of faith** which we preach"; it was the heralding of what the Lord HATH done; not what He shall do, or can do! "The works were finished from the foundation of the world" declares the Holy Spirit (Heb. 4:3). A spiritual perusal of the first chapter of Ephesians will reveal that the basis of our faith is that which has **already** been performed. The Lord has **already** wrought everything necessary for your salvation; the inheritance is **already** laid up in heaven for you; your sins have **already** been cast behind His back — you are called upon to believe that. Those that do not respond in true faith may have this said of them; "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). Further, the Gospel is such that if it is "kept in memory" it will actually save us (I Cor. 15:1-3).

Let none seek to minimize, therefore, the Word of God — for it is the Word that brings to us the message of salvation, and it is the Word upon which rests our faith. As Paul once declared to a frightened group of sailors; "Sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God!" **Admittedly, the flesh is confounded by this spiritual simplicity, but how glorious it is to the "new man" who feeds upon this truth.** Righteousness through faith — praise the Lord! We are **RIGHT** because we believe! That is the "righteousness which is of faith."

Because we have many readers that are yet under the yoke of the law, we offer this word of explanation, lest any charge us with encouraging slothfulness in the Kingdom of God. "Good works" are that to which we have been ordained (Eph. 2:10), and we **hold no countenance at all for those who disdain involvement in the actual execution of righteous deeds.** This treatise has dealt with the **CAUSE** of our approval with God; the thing that makes us righteous and accepted of Him. All who have been truly accepted of Him, and have believed "unto the saving of the soul", will be found bringing forth the proper fruit in some measure. They work because they are righteous because they believe; they believe because they heard; they heard because God sent the Word to them! To God be **all** the glory, great things **He** hath done — that is the joyous response of faith, and I trust that it is now found in your heart!

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Commentary on Philippians

BY RICHARD EBLER

Chapter One.

v. 1) **Paul and Timotheus.** Paul, the apostle and sole writer of this epistle, begins by stating his name. He was once called "Saul" and had been notorious for persecuting the church, but what a change can be wrought in a man's life by the power of God through Christ! "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature" (II Cor. 5:17), and so is worthy of a new name!

Paul links his name with Timothy's. The brethren at Philippi knew Timothy, for he had been with Paul when the apostle first preached at Philippi (Acts 16:1-40), and Paul was about to send him back to Philippi as one likeminded who would naturally care for their spiritual state (Phil. 2:20). Note the humility of the great apostle in joining young Timothy's name with his. What an encouragement for Timothy! Furthermore, there was nothing in the flesh to tie these two brethren together, yet their bonds in Christ were close. Timothy was his "own son in the faith," and spent much time with Paul. This was necessary for growth in grace and godliness.

The servants of Jesus Christ. Paul does not need to use his usual formal title of "apostle" with the Philippians, for they had never questioned his apostleship, but had continued steadfastly in the faith and were very dear to the apostle (ch. 1:7, 8), as he was to them (ch. 4:10). Therefore he says "servants". It is the highest honor to be **this** kind of servant! A servant to the King of Kings! The word "doulos" denotes a slave. Paul was a slave of love, one who for love of his master had (as it were) been willing to have his ear put to the door and pierced (Ex. 21:1-6) that he might serve him forever. And why not? One must either be a slave of sin or else of Christ (Rom. 6:17, 18). Service to sin is hard bondage, offering empty pleasure for a season, followed by sorrow and eternal torment. Service to Christ is perfect freedom, for it is done in a state of joy, love, and faith, issuing forth in life. It is simply a matter of "whom ye shall serve."

To all the saints. Notice that Paul does not have the faith of Christ with respect of persons (Jas. 2:1-8) for God does not, and as followers of God neither should we (Acts 10:34, Eph. 5:1). He writes to "all the saints," the lowest as well as the highest. It is good to cultivate this spirit and to pray always for all saints (Eph. 6:18).

"All" is a word common to this epistle, perhaps because of his godly concern for their unity (ch. 1:27, 2:2, 3:16, 4:2), for he knew the devastating effects of division and thus exhorts certain disciples to "mark them that cause divisions among you and avoid them, "lest they seduce your own soul and draw you away after themselves. God hates those that sow discord among brethren (Prov. 6:16-19). This is the devil's work.

Paul uses the word "saint" as a general name for his "brethren," and not as it is used by the Roman Catholics. The Greek word "agios" is

sometimes rendered "holy," sometimes "saint." They were not holy of themselves for holiness is not the result of outward activity, but it is a quality of soul possessed by those who are inwardly brought into fellowship with Christ. These are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, mourn over sin, are pure in heart, are willing to suffer persecution for righteousness' sake, are zealous of good works, and feel themselves to be strangers and pilgrims in this present evil world simply because they truly believe God! (Matt. 5:1-12, Titus 2:14, Heb. 11:13).

In Christ Jesus. They are holy only because they are "in Christ." They have a borrowed holiness, which they partake of from Him. They were "chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world that they should be holy" (Eph. 1:4). Personal holiness is the fruitage of the personal election of God. God freely, unconditionally, immutably chooses whome He pleases to be "partakers of His holiness" apart from any foreseen merit, faith, or works (Eph. 1:4-11). This election manifests itself in the area of time by the Providential hearing of the gospel, by the reception of repentance and faith which are the gifts of God, and by continuance in the way of holiness (Acts 13:48, 5:31; Eph. 2:8, 9; 1 Peter 1:5; Phil. 1:6). To be "in Christ" experimentally is to be baptized into his body (I Cor. 12:13), of his flesh and of his bones (Eph. 5:30). "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (I Cor. 6:17). It is to spiritually dwell where He dwells, in the heavens and not upon earth. It is to be out of self and into Christ, to think like Him and to have His affections as your own. In short, it is to experience spiritual union and communion with Him.

Which are at Philippi. Paul was writing only to the saints which were at Philippi. This intimates that not everyone at the city of Philippi was a saint. There are some who are children of the devil (John 8:44). Although this may seem to be an obvious and unnecessary point, many today would try to force the walls of God's sheepfold out to include many carnal persons who are destitute of spiritual life, grace, and truth. It is a hard saying, but "narrow is the way and few there be that find it" (Matt. 7:14).

With the bishops and deacons. The "bishop" is synonymous with "elder" or "presbyter" (Acts 20:17, 28 Gk.) being a term designating a minister of the Word of God in a local assembly. There were several men capable of preaching at Philippi and we rejoice to have it so at our own assembly at Colfax. It is precious to find one's own experiences and situation matching that of Scripture. Many today misuse the term "bishop" to refer to a ruler over many churches. This is another perversion of Babylon. Let us speak in "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth" and avoid fostering false concepts.

(v. 3) "I thank my God upon ever remembrance of you."

Immediately after the salutation we find Paul giving thanks. This is the first thing on the agenda. Paul often did this at the beginning of his epistles: "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all . . ." (Rom. 1:8), "I thank my God always on your behalf. . ." (I Cor. 1:4),

"We give thanks to God always for you all . . ." (I Thess. 1:2), "We give thanks to God . . ." (Col. 1:3), "I thank God . . ." (II Tim. 1:3). God desires primarily to be worshipped (John 4:23), and two principal parts of worship are praise and thanksgiving. In fact, the primary ministry of the church is that we should be to the praise of the glory of His grace (I Peter 2:9, Eph. 1:6, 12, 14).

Accordingly, Paul makes the work of grace in the saints the object of his praise and thanksgiving. It is God who works righteousness in the hearts of his people. This indeed is a mighty work! It is worthy of the utmost praise! The new creation requires a greater display of the Divine power than did the first creation, for when God created the heavens and the earth He had no opposition. But when He made us new creatures in Christ Jesus He faced and overcame opposition from not only Satan, but ourselves also. He had to first bind the strong man (Satan), and then turn us from the power of Satan unto God (Matt. 12:29, Acts 26:18). This was no small feat considering that by nature we were totally dead in trespasses and in sins, being alienated from the life of God, and unable in ourselves to take the first step in seeking Him (Eph. 2:1, 4:18, Rom. 3:11). Truly we do live in a spiritual universe in which men are ruled by the things which do not appear, i.e. the spiritual powers under the control of God. Only after much suffering did Nebuchadnezzar learn that "the heavens do rule" (Dan. 4:26). Therefore we see that the spiritual overthrow of sin in the heart of a mortal man is indeed the greatest work of God, for it requires the very power that brought Christ from the dead and is fittingly the cause of Paul's thanksgiving.

Note that Paul does not view the brethren after the flesh, but views them as trophies of grace. When one wishes to give a sincere compliment to a brother (perhaps even in public, if the case requires that we give honor unto whom honor is due), the best way of phrasing it is on this wise: "I thank God for the grace that is given to our Brother So-and-So in this particular area . . . he ministers to me in this way." This manner of speech will both encourage the brother and yet give God the pre-eminence in all things.

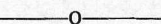
Note that he said, "I thank MY God . . ." We have a personal God. As it is written in David: "Thou are my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation" (Psa. 89:26). Man craves and needs a personal God, One that is Himself a person so that man can love Him, talk to Him, deal with Him, trust Him, worship Him, and be conformed to His image, One that is personally interested in us in a personal way; yes, even numbering the very hairs on our head. And such is our God!

Observe that he saith, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." How wonderful this is! Suppose that every brother could always say this with the apostle Paul! All evil thoughts would automatically be eliminated and a general spirit of love and thanksgiving would pervade the atmosphere of the soul, which would be most wholesome. The word "devil" literally means "slan-

derer," and truly he does slander the brethren to one another in an attempt to disrupt the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. This habitual thanksgiving upon every remembrance is a method whereby we may bring every thought into captivity unto the obedience of Christ. At the same time we see herein an exhortation to live such sober, righteous, and godly lives as are pleasing to the Lord and will redound to his glory by giving our brethren ample cause for thanksgiving as they behold our steadfastness in the faith.

What a wonderful spirit Paul had! Surely these brethren had faults as we all have, yet Paul continued to constantly thank God upon every remembrance of them. The bonds of affection between Paul and the Philippians were especially tender.

Paul says "upon every remembrance." The Christian life is largely a matter of remembering. Paul here remembered the Philippians often and gave thanks every time. Those who are most advanced in the faith find themselves often engaged in the holy exercise of simply remembering precious truths and experiences in the Lord over again and again. The gospel is said to save us if we keep it in memory (I Cor. 15:2). Peter desired to stir up the pure minds of the saints by way of remembrance. Knowing the weakness of our frame, Christ instituted ordinances and said "This do in remembrance of me." We are exhorted to "hold fast the form of sound words," and to "be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." How simple! How humiliating! How wise of God to design it thus! Let us meditate and feed much on the truth!



Idolatry

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen." — I Jno. 5:21

One of the commissions to the believer is this; "Keep yourself from idols." It is a fact that this admonition has not often been expressed where it should have been, because its meaning has been clouded over by the tradition of men. A difficult matter, indeed, it is to keep oneself from idols — else the admonition would not have been given. **We are not to permit our hearts to be ravished by idols, nor are we to indulge them in idolatrous practices — innocent though they may appear.** Idols may serve a purpose to some — but they serve none to the elect! By saying "keep yourselves from idols", John implies that there is a proclivity within the human breast toward this despicable activity. Further, he implies that there are many things which are struggling for our attention and our affection. We are to shun them, stay away from them, and diligently refuse them admittance into our hearts and our desires. By saying "Keep YOURSELVES from idols", John shows that **our chief and fundamental aim is the protection of our own estate in Christ.** As Paul put it elsewhere; "Take heed unto THYSELF, and unto the doctrine, and continue in them; for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee" (I Tim. 4:16). The primary objective of every saint, in this respect,

is to "save himself from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40-41). It is admitted that there is a heresy afoot in the religious world which causes men to disdain any attention given to self — but the Holy Spirit has not so instructed us. If we ourselves are not kept pure, how shall we hope to be used of the Lord in any respect for the purification of others (II Tim. 2: 15-22).

What Is An Idol

An idol is chiefly something that appeals to the flesh; that is sensual or observable in its constitution. In the Law, God spoke repeatedly of idols, and of the tendency within men to trust to that which they could see and touch; which, in short, was observable to the carnal mind and required no faith for embracement. **An idol is something in which men trust which possesses no inherent power to save, assist, succour, or instruct. It cannot communicate effectually to the comfort and the upbuilding of its adherent, is temporal, and generally possesses some sort of form** (for references, read; Ex. 20:3-6, 23; Lev. 19:4; 26:1, 30; Duet. 4:15-16; 27:15; Heb. 1:16) All idols are identified by certain abstract terms in Scripture, a few of which are here mentioned; (1. An empty thing; Heb., Isa. 66:3). (2. Nothing; Heb., Psa. 95:6; 97:7). (3. Shameful thing; Jer. 11:13). (4. Detestable things (Ezek. 37:23). These terms point up not only the utter futility of trusting to idols, but that they are an abomination to the Lord of hosts.

There are also names ascribed to idols which tend to identify them further to our minds: (1. Likeness or similitude — Duet. 4:16). (2. Image or representation — Ezek. 23:14). (3. Something to look at or standing image — Lev. 26:1). It is at once seen here that **idols are inventions for the satisfaction of the flesh**; a thing that is created by man and for man is an idol, when it becomes the object of attention and affection which is due only to God. By way of further definition, **idolatry is the paying of divine honors to anything that has been created; the ascription of supernatural power to natural agencies.** The thing need not be tangible; it may be developed only within the recesses of the mind — yet, it takes the place of Jehovah God, and is given the honor which is rightfully His alone!

Idols are "by nature no gods" (Gal. 4:8), and thus are "nothing in the world" (I Cor. 8:4). Therefore, they are called "**dumb idols**" (I Cor. 12:2). The apostles approached the worshippers of idols in this fashion; "We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these **vanities** unto the **living God**" (Acts 14:15). They were called "vanities" because they were not able to communicate life, nor righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17). They were merely the **objects** of attention, being unable to actually confer anything of lasting value upon their worshippers. When men given to idolatry find themselves in straits, and unable to handle their own situation, there should be righteous men available to chide them into faith by saying; "Where are thy gods that thou hast made thee? let them

arise, if they can save thee in the time of trouble . . ." (Jer. 2:28).

The "true God" (I John 5:20), however, is not only the object of our heart's fondest affection and most awesome worship, but is the giver of "every good and perfect gift", who "giveth liberally to all men and upbraideth not" (Js. 1:5-6, 17). There is nothing figmentary about Him, but He is "Spirit", and "they that worship Him **must** worship Him in Spirit and truth" (John 4:23-24). He is, in reality, "above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:6), and "all things are of Him, and through Him, and to Him" (Rom. 11:36). But it is not so with idols! Though men claim that their self-conceived gods have power, authority, and will, they have not! They can neither love, comfort, exhort, rebuke, save, nor destroy — and so they are no gods. But, having commented briefly upon the nature of idols, and attempted to define, somewhat, what an idol is, permit me to deal with some current idols which are not often mentioned by my contemporaries. I begin with, what I believe to be, the most evil of all idols:

The Idols Of "God" And Of "Christ"

It is deserving that I offer somewhat of an explanation for this heading, because it appears very much on the order of blasphemy. I have placed "God" and "Christ" in quotes, because I seek to deal with the beings that men declare to be God and Christ — not with the actual Persons of God and Christ. **There is a vast difference between the real God and the professed "God", the actual Christ, and the embraced "Christ" of the multitudes.** It has been for some time now that an element of disgust has existed in my own soul concerning the reproach that has been brought upon the mighty Savior through the professed "church" of our day. One can be reasonably tolerable of some misdemeanors if the Christ that professors hold forth is at least the true Christ; but when neither conduct, embracement or instruction are proper, it leaves no alternative but to speak; and "having the same spirit of faith, having believed, therefore I speak".

The "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ", as He is called in Holy Writ, is **worthy** of all of our worship and homage, for He is truly "above all." It is written; "The head of every woman is man, and the head of man is Christ, and **the head of Christ is God**" (I Cor. 11:3). Further, Paul proclaimed that when the "end" was come, Jesus would "deliver up the Kingdom of God the Father . . ." and "then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (I Cor. 15:24-26). It was Jesus Himself, our Lord and Savior, that proclaimed; "My Father that gave them me is **greater** than all" (John 10:29), and again; ". . . for **My Father is greater than I**" (John 14:28). The superiority of God the Father is seen, among other things, in the fact that Christ is the Mediator BETWEEN God and man (I Tim. 2:5-6). Our Lord Jesus is our means of access to the **Father** (Eph. 2:18), and His vicarious death and resurrection was in order to "bring us to **God**" (I Pet. 3:18). Yet, this is not the God that is proclaimed

from the pulpits of "fundamental, evangelical churches" (as they are wont to be called)! Rather, very little is said at all about the **Father**, and bring great disgrace upon the entire work of redemption by implying, if not stating outrightly, that Jesus comes into our heart in disassociation from the "Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning" (Jr. 1:17). I submit to your heart that, first of all, the true and living God (that is introduced to us by the Savior Himself — I John 5:20) may unashamedly be confessed as the **Head** of Christ, who **sent** Christ, **bruised** Christ, **raised** Christ, **exalted** Christ, gave Him **authority** over all things, gave Him to be the **Head** over all things to the church, and Who will yet **send** Him in His own good time to bring an end to the natural order (Jno. 5:30; I Jno. 4:14; Isa. 53:10; Rom. 6:4; Phil. 2:9; Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:22; Acts 3:20). It is the **Father** Himself who hath designed our salvation; to whom all glory and honor is ascribed in the Son who hath wrought His Father's will (Jno. 5:30; 6:38).

There are few passages of Scripture where this is so gloriously set forth as the first chapter of Ephesians; how it speaks to my heart! There, Paul begins by blessing the Father (v. 3), declaring that **He** hath "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." He further ascribes the glory of our "choosing" to Him, declaring that "**He** hath chosen us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world" (v. 4), affirming without carnal explanation that **He** "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ TO HIMSELF", and that "according to the good pleasure of **His** will" (v. 5). The purpose of this great work was in order to the "praise of the glory of **HIS** grace" (v. 6), in which grace **He** hath "made us accepted in the Beloved (Christ Jesus)". That same grace hath caused us to "have redemption through" Christ's "blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (v. 7). Praise the Lord, our **Father** "hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of **HIS** will, according to **HIS** good pleasure which **HE** hath purposed in Himself" (v. 8-9). The great good-pleasure of the **Father** is to "gather into one all things in Christ" (v. 10), in order that we should "be to the praise of **His** glory, who first trusted in Christ" (v. 10-12). Now, reader, I submit to you that **this** God is not preached in the nominal (or even avid) churches of our day. The whole message has a strange sound to it in the ears of those who are accustomed only to hearing the garble that spews out of seminarians today! But why is it so strange? Because they have not had declared unto them the "TRUE GOD" (I Jno. 5:20), but rather an idol, called "Father" and "Jehovah", but who is actually an offspring of the cunning imagination of men! Very few purported ministers of the Word are setting the Father forth as He who hath wrought out our redemption through Christ Jesus. Few indeed know the preciousness of the truth that Jesus came to do the **Father's** will, and not His own.

But, the Father is unknown in another one of His glorious attributes; and that is His Sovereignty. Oh, here is a stumblingstone, indeed, to the

flesh. It cannot bear to think that there is a God that does what He pleases, when He pleases, conferring with none, and righteous in all of His judgments. The thoughts of a God that elects, hardens, works evil, creates peace, raises up evil men to sit upon thrones, and abases the mighty are most contemptible to religious flesh. But, that is no matter to us, for we love to have it so — I say, it is a delight to our spirits to have the fleshiness of man's pseudo-faith brought to the light in order to true illumination and salvation. Yet, all of the things that are declared above are categorically stated in the Word, which these blasphemers purport to accept! "Who shall lay anything to the charge of GOD'S elect" (Rom. 8:33); "Therefore hath He mercy upon whom He will have mercy, and whom He will HE hardeneth" (Rom. 9:18); "I make peace and create evil" (Isa. 45:7); "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Dan. 4:17); "Thus saith the Lord; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high" (Ezek. 21:26). Now, a man should be a fool of the rankest order to declare that these truths are **commonly** preached. The whole church-world should stand and laugh at him, were they but half-way honest. These truths are NOT being preached with any degree of consistency; in fact, there are myriads — literally myriads — of church-goers that do not even know these things are stated in the Scripture. But why — I ask you WHY? Why have they not heard? They profess that they believe in God; their preachers say that they have proclaimed God — yet they have no knowledge of the true God of Which we speak. It is true that they have heard of A god, but not of the TRUE GOD! The preachers have invented unto themselves an imaginary idol; a god of their own making, and have pawned it off upon the ignorant and unsuspecting public (may the Lord judge them according to their works!). The god of the average church could never, for instance, "predestinate" people "unto the adoption of sons" (Eph. 1:4), Whose purpose "according to election" could stand "not of works, but of Him that calleth" (Rom. 9:11). He could positively never "choose" men "unto salvation from the beginning" (II Thess. 2:13), or "ordain" men "unto life" (Acts 13:48). Of those that failed to obey this figmentary god, it could not be said; "even to them which stumbled at the word, being disobedient: **whereunto also they were appointed**" (I Pet. 2:8).

Of this imaginary god's creatures it could not be said that some were "certain men crept in un-awares, who were before of old **ordained unto this condemnation**" (Jude 4), or "these, as natural brute beasts, **mare to be taken and destroyed**" (II Pet. 2:12). I say, what clear thinking man could even conceive of such a God being preached in modern fundamental churches? Yet, this is the God proclaimed by the Holy Spirit through the Apostles and prophets! Are we to ignore these, proclamations, and swiftly sweep them under the rug declaring that they are too profound for the people? Why are they not read and declared —

yea, expounded to the people of God? It is because this God is not the god of the "church" that generally exists today! He is thoroughly obnoxious to their minds, and thus they reject Him, only to create and receive one of their own invention. Their god is in a fierce battle with the devil for the minds of men, and it is not certain whether he can take the men or not — we must wait to the last day and see how it all turns out. He has all power (theoretically), but withholds it, and exercises it not in the behalf of the saved. His hands are described as man's hands, and His feet as man's feet. If man does not do His work, it cannot be done, and he is limited by the will of his own creatures. But the God of our Lord Jesus Christ makes us "willing in the day of His power" (Psa. 110:3), and "turneth" the king's heart "whithersoever He will" (Prov. 21:1). He, rather than being restrained and hampered by man, is spoken of, even by discerning flesh, in this fashion; "Who hath resisted His will" (Rom. 9:19); and His new creatures in Christ Jesus confess of their conversion, and of all others; "Who was I, that I could withstand God"? (Acts 11:17). But, the point has been made here, permit me to move on to the idol of "Jesus Christ."

Our Lord Jesus Himself is the crowning glory and image of the Father; yea, the "express Image of the Father" (Heb. 1:3). He shines forth in the resplendent glory and majesty of He who is over all. He hath wrought an effectual work of redemption — so effectual, in fact, that the Father has been forever satisfied, and no further price need be paid. He has been exalted above all principality and power and authority, angels and authorities and powers being made subject to Him (I Pet. 3:22). There is not a name upon the earth, or in heaven over which He has not been gloriously exalted. **Jesus is in contest with none, but is rather the "Head over all things"**, and has been given, in that capacity, to the church (Eph. 1:22). His adversary, the Devil, has already been defeated by Him, and made a show of openly (Col. 2:15). Christ is truly "mighty to save", being "strong in battle", and subdues His enemies underneath His mighty treading foot. He speaks with the voice of power, and those to whom He speaks in His power come alive, even as did Lazarus of old. As it is written; "The hour is coming, and now is, when the **dead** shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25). That His voice is uttered with judgement, and with **particular** discretion is evidenced in the following words, spoken by our Lord Himself; "For the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so, the Son quickeneth **WHOM HE WILL**" (John 5:21). We cannot ignore the fact that there is a certain **distinguishing** quality here — "**WHOM HE WILL!**" That is who He quickens, and none may stop that quickening any more than they could have prohibited Him from raising Lazarus from the grave (John 11). It cannot be countered that the person being quickened can hinder the work, for he is dead, even as Lazarus, and **the dead can hinder nothing, for it is they themselves that are hindered**, and the Lord is the breaker of their

hinderance! Our Lord Jesus is not a doting, crying monarch, pleading with men to receive Him, but devoid of power to constrain them to receive Him! He pleads **effectually**, praise the Lord; and He exhorts and commands with power. What lame man or blind man was ever commanded of him to walk or see that came not walking or seeing? What dead person was ever commanded to come to life by our Savior that remained upon the death bed? What leper was ever pronounced clean that became not clean? What person with crooked back, or issue of blood ever had a word spoken to them by the Savior concerning their restoration who effectually resisted that word?

Come now, you sophists that stand in the guise of ministers of Christ, and preach a failing Savior, who is restrained and bound by the fetters of man's will! What say ye to these things — where are the answers? Would you that we speak not concerning an all-powerful and all-glorious Savior? Yea, you would, for it sounds the death-knell for your despicable institutions! You cannot stand at peace in the midst of the sound of the Gospel of a Christ who **hath** received all power in heaven and earth, and who **shall** tread all of His enemies under His feet; who brings to the knee, in humble obedience and contrition, all of whom His blessed Father hath given unto Him. No! You cannot bear to hear of this Christ! You do not like to hear of a Christ that has **already** had the sheep given unto Him (John 17; Heb. 2:13). But why? It is because He mixes not well with the idol that you have invented and perpetrated as Christ Jesus! But, praise God, we shall sound Him forth in your ears, for He is precious to us. And for those of you that know the Lord Jesus, and have heard Him concerning the "truth as it is in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 4:20-21), and have been taught by Him concerning "the true God and eternal life" (I John 5:20), it is a certain refreshment to the soul to have it again confirmed unto your hearts that Christ truly "fillesh all things" (Eph. 1:23).

His Word is with power, and not even the devil can resist Him — to say nothing of mortal man, who is of less strength than Satan or any of his evil angels and spirits. This one last question I would ask of those who oppose what I have preached; what demon ever, being commanded by Christ to be removed, contested effectually, or resisted finally the decree? Was there ever an evil spirit that the Lord dismissed that did not bow to His Omnipotent word? And, if this be so, would you have us believe that men, being of less power and wisdom, could do such a thing? What, for instance, would you say of Saul of Tarsus, who was **not** seeking Christ, but was rather on a mission of enmity against Him? Did Jesus have trouble with him when his hour came? Nay — and He shall have difficulty with none of His children as their hour approaches and it pleases the Lord to reveal His Son in them! We want nothing to do with your idol, which you blasphemously call "Christ!" He has too much organization about him — too much glory is attributed to men; his ministers speak too much in the wisdom of this world, and he is too hampered by conditions and circumstances. You will, perhaps,

pardon our supposed folly, but we, knowing the Lord Jesus Christ, and loving Him, consider Him truly a treasure in the field, and are most content to bow to His Sovereignty.

Ah, but for you, the Beloved of the Lord, whose hearts tell you that this is the true Christ, we herald to you this glad message concerning the source of your conviction; "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father but the Son, and **he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him**" (Matt. 11:27). It is the Son Himself that has opened up the Father to you; and it is the Father Himself that has led you to the Son (John 6:44, 65). Be of good cheer! It is with some element of reluctance that I go on in this great theme, knowing how uncomfortable it is to the flesh. Yet because the hearts of true believers are cheered by the truth, there is one more point I seek to develop. It concerns an idol of immense largeness which exists all about us:

The Idol of the Church

The true church is the "body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12; Eph. 1:23); i.e., those that have been made "partakers of Christ" (Heb. 3:14), are "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph. 5:30) — who have, in truth, been "joined unto the Lord", and thus are "one spirit" with Him (I Cor. 6:17). **The church is the projection of the personality of Christ, the "fulness of Him which filleth all in all"** (Eph. 1:23). These individuals are recipients of Divine grace, which has rescued them from a helpless and hopeless condition, where they were "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:3), and were "enemies" of God (Rom. 5:8-10). **Their chief distinction is that they have found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and are set forth as "works" that are designed to bring forth "praise to the glory of His grace"** (Eph. 1:6; 2:10). The church is representative; a creation of God, and therefore cannot receive worship from God's creatures. Rather, the church is to be engaged in worship, in bringing forth sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (I Pet. 2:5). **The church is the called out assembly of God; those that have been called out of the worldly order for the purpose of the enjoyment of God Himself; taken out of the world for His Name** (Acts 15:14).

There exists today, a fabrication of this true church, which uses the same name, and purports to be of God, claims Christ as its Savior, and preaches a gospel to its constituents. But, this church is an idol, and not the true church at all. Being unable to apprehend the truth of the "body" of Christ by faith, sophists have resorted to carnal reasoning, and have invented unto themselves an **institution** which they call "the church." To this institution they ascribe the attributes of the living God, insinuating, if not actually proclaiming, that she is able to save and able to destroy. Homage is paid to this institution that is most fervent and diligent, while the true and living God remains unknown. Conferences and gatherings are held in the name of

The Cross of Christ

the church; the institution is given a title that is paraded before the public as though it had the power to save. Men are known as members of that organization, instead of being recognized as members of Christ. We hear of Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, members of the Christian Church, Social Brethren, Plymouth Brethren, Pentecostals, etc. Why?

Why do men insist upon being so identified? It is because an idol has been given to them, and they believe this idol to have merit. **It is sinful to call ourselves after another when we are actually wedded to the Lord Himself.** Why should we ascribe, for instance, the glory of our salvation to the Baptist church, by calling ourselves "Baptists"; and as if this were not contemptuous enough, some even glory in the name of their church, as though anyone that were not associated with it came decidedly short of the grace available to him. Is this not ascribing the attributes of God to a carnal organization? Did Jesus build the church in order for her to receive homage and honor from its people — or did He found it as a token of God's grace; a "glorious church" that should be "without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; which church shall be presented to Himself as a chaste bride? **The church is not the center of attention in the Kingdom of God; the Lord Himself occupies the Throne — not the church!** It is the true church that is afforded the grace to view Him Who sits upon the Throne in all of His glory; and having seen Him, to give Him all honor and glory, all praise and majesty, while ascribing salvation and honor and glory to Him, and to Him alone! We love the church; we treasure her members — the members of Christ they are; **but we do not worship her, we do not ascribe unto her the attributes which alone belong to the Lord Himself.** We do not commit our souls unto her, trust to her for deliverance, or ascribe glory and honor unto her which rightfully belongs to our Lord. Here, in the "church of the Living God" (I Tim. 3:15), we have access to God by grace through faith; we stand in the favor of God because we stand in His Beloved Son, in whom we have been made accepted (Eph. 1:6b).

Let us be honest in our appraisals of the situation that is set before us. Is it not true that seminaries, church organizations, counsels, conferences, camps, and other such things, are generally organized and promoted for the sole purpose of advancing the religious organizations involved. Countless programs, endless energies, and exhaustive preparations are engaged in solely for the "church"; for the purpose of increasing its "name" among those that are of the world. If this be denied, then it is evidenced that there is an obvious, if not intentional, ignorance of the real case. Literature, meetings, etc., are set forth in the name of the church — not in the name of Christ our Savior. **The reason for this is simply that there is more reverence for the institution men call "the church" than there is for the Lord of the true church — Jesus Christ!** Oh reader, let not a visible organization take the place of an invisible reigning Monarch, who "only hath

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which ARE saved, it is the POWER of God" — I Cor. 1:18

The "cross" of Christ is to be preached — proclaimed — because of its glorious message. Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from "faith unto faith" (Rom. 1:16, 17). When we speak of "the cross", we are referring primarily to the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the benefits that were effectuated thereby. All of the power of God was manifested there; yea, was exerted there, in the behalf of God's righteousness and man's redemption. Though to men it appeared as though the cross meant defeat for Christ, it was actually His victory. As it is written; **"And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it"** (Col. 2:15). As Satan converged in all of his heinous power against the Son of God, he appeared to be the victor. But "the Lord shall laugh" and have him in derision, for thereby was the "Prince of this world" defeated, and God's king sat on the Holy mount (Psa. 2). The cross is not merely to be preached, however, to those that have never heard of it and are lost; it is also food for the soul of the believer. Yea, to them, it is "the power of God." **Still the cross exercises its power in the hearts of the saints, renewing within them hope, love, and determination to do the will of God, to say nothing of the great spring of thanksgiving that comes from the knowledge of it.**

Concerning the cross, it is freely acknowledged that it appears foolishness to the flesh, and yet we also confess that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men" (I Cor. 1:25); i.e., **what appears to the fleshly mind to be a foolish and weak thing with God actually becomes the means of overthrowing flesh in its wisest and most elevated station.** Verily, "God hath chosen the foolish things OF THE WORLD to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things OF THE WORLD to confound the things which are mighty; and base things OF THE WORLD, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: **that no flesh should glory in His presence**" (I Cor. 1:27-29). We need not expect that salvation shall be appealing to the mind of the flesh, nor the means whereby it has been wrought beautiful to carnal men. The cross is not appealing to

immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to Whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen" (I Tim. 6:16). Let our Father be the "Giver of every good and perfect gift" (Js. 1:17), and the church the giver of "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 2:5). **Let the church be the recipient of grace, and the Father the recipient of glory.** Let no energies be consumed for the perpetration of her name, but rather for His Name! Amen!

the carnal: a crucified Savior, forsaken of God and man, has no drawing power to those that are rooted in the earth, in whom a work of the Lord has not been performed! Therefore, we seek not to make the message of the cross a philosophical dainty to the carnal mind: we make no attempts to make a dying Savior appealing to those that are not weary of their sin — who seek not a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. We simply declare the truth of the cross, knowing that its message shall strike a vibrant note in the hearts of the saved, and that the Holy Spirit shall use such a message to draw out the elect unto the Father through the Son.

The Cross of Christ And Sin

It was on the cross that sin was dealt the devastating blow. There our offences were laid upon Christ, and He bore the full brunt of the wrath of the Almighty. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 4:23), and on the cross those wages were paid in the fullest sense of the word. It was Peter that declared that "He bore our sins in His body on the tree" (I Pet. 2:24), in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy: "the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). The Holy Spirit testifies that **"He was made to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him"** (II Cor. 5:21). It was upon the cross that this work was wrought! There He "tasted death for every man", by the grace of God (Heb. 2:9), and the Father, seeing the "travail of His soul" was "satisfied" (Isa. 53:11). **Never again, praise the Lord, will a sacrifice of any sort have to be made for sin — Jesus made it "once for all!"** As it is written: "For in that He died, He died unto sin ONCE" (Rom. 6:10): Who needeth not daily as those high priests to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, then for the people's: for this He did ONCE when He offered up Himself" (Heb. 7:27): "For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now ONCE in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9:26); "So Christ was ONCE offered to bear the sins of many . . ." (Heb. 9:28); "By the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Christ ONCE for all" (Heb. 10:10); "For Christ also hath ONCE suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Pet. 3:18). The penalty for all of our sins has been finally paid; it is little wonder that the elect shout forth triumphantly; "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect; it is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth, it is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again" (Rom. 8:33-34). Those who "receive the atonement" (Rom. 5:11) now approach unto the living God completely freed from the sin that encumbered them; God has, in Christ, blotted them out as a thick cloud (Isa. 44:22.)

Jesus was "cut off out of the land of the living" (Isa. 53:8) to accomplish that which was necessary to the reconciliation of man. Those in whom sin is dominant can have no fellowship with

God, but are rather condemned and cursed of Him to everlasting perdition. Their personal sin must be removed, and made an end of before eternal life may be received. In the cross of Christ we find an end made of sin and transgression before the face of God (Dan. 9:24), therefore we are not ashamed of the cross, for thereupon were our sins effectually removed from the face of God.

The Cross of Christ And The Law

When we speak of sin, we necessarily must speak also of the Law, for by the law is the knowledge of sin (Rom. 7:7); and again; "the strength of sin is the Law" (I Cor. 15:56); and again; "Sin is the transgression of the Law" (I Jno. 3:4). No matter if we be new creatures in Christ, if the Law is not removed from over our heads, we shall forever be condemned. It cannot be the standard of righteousness! for none can keep it in all of its implications. But, praise the Lord, our Savior removed the curse of the Law when He died upon the cross: as it is written; "Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances . . ." (Eph. 2:15); and again; "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to HIS cross" (Col. 2:14). In the Ephesian text we find that the Law was a "middle wall of partition" which stood between the Jew and the Gentile. Before that Christ came, it was said of the "sinners of the Gentiles" that they were "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). But, after the cross, that distinction was utterly destroyed, and the advantage of the Jews (chiefly because they possessed the "oracles of God" (Rom. 3:1), was nullified insofar as salvation is concerned. **At the cross mortal distinctions are removed, and in Christ there is "neither bond nor free, male nor female, Jew nor Greek"** (Gal. 3:28). It is refreshing to the spirit to know that the removal of the Law constituted the removal of enmity, so that now brethren may "dwell together in unity" (Psa. 133) because of the peace made at the cross, not only between God and man, but between all believers. Let them all be encouraged to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1).

But, there is another sense in which the Law has been removed, and that is found in the Colossian text! "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us" — joyful sound to the poor sinner! It ought to be observed that God, not Christ, is the subject of the verse in Colossians 2:14; **It was God the Father that removed the Law in the death of Christ; it is the Receiver, rather than the Offerer of satisfaction Who cancels the debt!** Jesus offered satisfaction to the Father in our behalf, and the Father received it; and having received it, **He cancelled out the debt of the Law** — praise the Lord! The Law could never justify (Acts 13:38-39), and thus it was necessary for it to be

cancelled — blotted out — in order that man stand acquitted and holy before the Monarch of creation. The reason it was necessary for it to be removed was that it was “contrary to us”; it worked against us because we were “by nature children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3), prone to sin; and earthward in our natural yearnings. **There existed a hostility between the Law and our hearts** (Rom. 6:15; Gal. 3:10), and because that carnal nature is with us until we die (even though it may not exercise the dominancy at times) the Law cannot be the rule of righteousness, because it permitted not even one infitesimal infraction — not even one! **The list of the commandments in the decalogue is but a list of our offences as we stand apart from Christ!** All of them are condemned — none of them are tolerated by a holy God! This law has been nailed to the cross, as it is written, in order that it might be declared in truth; “There is therefore now **no condemnation** to them that are in Christ Jesus” — (Rom. 8:1). **With the single stroke of His death, the whole bill of our offences was wiped out, to the glory of God, and our everlasting consolation.** Let those who seek to bind the law upon the followers of Christ have their mouths stopped forever, for we want no part of such an arrangement. It is even as Paul declared, that the Law even forbade lusting (Rom. 7:7); and what mortal is there — redeemed though he be — that has not the war with lusts that often pervade the mind and must be overthrown in the power of the Spirit? One sophist may reply; “But I did not obey those lusts!” But, what has that to do with the matter? The Law forbade lusting itself; the penalty of everlasting death was meted out to those who coveted or lusted — whether it was fulfilled or not!

It is only under the Gospel and the reign of grace that such things are not imputed unto us and we may acknowledge (though shame come unto us); “It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me” (Rob. 7:17). It cannot be countered that this makes way for indulgence in sin, for we who have tasted of the grace of God in truth know better; yea, it rather provides the sort of spiritual power that is necessary to overthrow these lusts and bring our thoughts into captivity unto the obedience of Christ (II Cor. 10:5-7). Let all believers rejoice in this; that at the cross the law which was contrary to them was taken out of the way; that it no longer stands between them and the Father, but that they now have access by faith through Jesus Christ!

The Cross of Christ and Satan

Those who have wrestled against the Adversary of our souls (I Pet. 5:8) are intensely interested in knowing of the relationship of the cross to the “old Serpent” (Rev. 12:9). It is with joy that we, therefore, proclaim the Gospel; “And having **spoiled** principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2:15). It was in His death that Jesus dealt the death blow to the Devil: “Forasmuch, then, as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself partook of the same: **THAT THROUGH DEATH HE MIGHT DESTROY HIM THAT HAD THE POWER OF DEATH, THAT IS, THE DEVIL**” (Heb. 2:14). Satan is now ren-

dered impotent so far as believers are concerned. It is a very wonderful turn of events that Satan, in working that which he thought would once and for all abolish man's hope of a Redeemer, but wrought out his own destruction! Here, at the cross, all of the forces of hell converged for the final assault upon the Lord. There they designed, under their Prince, Satan, to once and for all squelch the Divine life. This was the supreme test of Satan's power (which had been given to him of God); if he could overcome Christ here, he, then, would be the ruler, and hold the children captive to the fear of death. But, praise the Lord, as they clave unto the Lord, holding him in the grave, our Precious Lord, shook Himself like Samson of old, and brake the bands asunder, coming forth from the confines of death into the glorious life of God. What further weapon had Satan to implement against the Lord of lords and King of kings? This was the “last” power that he possessed, the greatest and most powerful exhibition of darkness that had been allotted to him (I Cor. 15:26); it was his final and most potent thrust! But “it was not possible that” Jesus should be “holden” by the “pains of death” (Acts 2:28). He arose triumphantly, exposing the weakness of Satan, and his absolute inferiority to the Omnipotent God. **There was no real competition, only a demonstration and an accomplishment of Divine purpose**, as it is written (Acts 4:25-28).

Those who trust in Jesus are now “more than conquerors through Him that loved us” (Rom. 8:38-39), for their chief foe is already defeated. So strong has been his defeat that we may rest in this promise; “Draw nigh unto the Lord, and He will draw nigh unto thee; **resist the Devil, and he will flee from you**” (Js. 4:7). His only power is delusion (although, that be a mighty power). He sets about, now, to “blind” men's “minds” to the glorious Gospel of Christ (II Cor. 4:4), knowing, that once blinded, they shall remain in bondage to him. However, when the glorious light of the glory of God has been made to shine into our hearts in the face of Christ Jesus (II Cor. 4:6), there comes a freedom from his power. It is even as Jesus declared; “And ye shall **know the truth, and the truth shall make you free**. . . If the Son hath made you free, ye shall be **free indeed**” (Jno. 8:32, 36). The truth is that Satan has **ALREADY** been defeated; **ALREADY** made a show of; **ALREADY** destroyed! That is the message of faith — “**ALREADY!**” and it is truth. **We are not called upon to defeat Satan, but to “resist” him** (I Pet. 5:8, 9) — he has already been defeated. There, at the cross of Christ, was it wrought. Believe God, and receive comfort to your soul!